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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [ECON](#) [AORC](#) [KUNR](#) [EG](#)
SUBJECT: EGYPT AND THE U.S.: BILATERAL TIES NOT REFLECTED
IN MULTILATERAL FORA

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOHN R. BOLTON FOR REASONS 1.4 (b) AND (d).

11. (C) Summary and Comment: The prevailing atmosphere at the UN is one of increasing polarization between the UN's top donors (chiefly the U.S., Japan, Europe and CANZ) and the G-77. This sharpening divide manifests itself in debates across the full spectrum of reform issues: administrative, budgetary, institutional and policy. Within the G-77, several prominent states consistently oppose U.S. positions, and employ rhetoric or tactics inimical to U.S. interests. Of those states, Egypt -- drawing on its history as a NAM leader and its strengths in multilateral negotiations -- is one of a handful of countries otherwise generally friendly to the U.S. (including India, Pakistan, Brazil and South Africa) that band together with countries widely understood to be in direct confrontation with the U.S. (e.g., Cuba, Iran, Syria) to frustrate U.S. objectives. This cable is the first in a series on the troublemakers.

12. (C) In addition to its leading role in formulating G-77 positions, Egypt is also an active force in the NAM, the Africa Group, the Arab Group and the OIC. Egypt currently serves as the coordinator of the NAM's working group on mandate review and reform of the Secretariat, a position that allows it to serve as principal drafter for many NAM statements on issues of importance to the U.S. As much of the policy work in the UN is conducted in these regional and other groups (in which the U.S. does not participate), Egypt can achieve a "force multiplier" impact by advancing its views under their names. Some Egyptian positions, such as an insistence that the actions of national liberation movements constitute resistance not terrorism, are issues on which they have stood in opposition to U.S. policy for many years. Other Egyptian positions, and their aggressive rhetoric in support of them, have developed in response to the current debate on UN reform.

13. (C) The net result is a paradoxical asymmetry: despite our close bilateral relationship with Egypt, Egypt routinely opposes U.S. policy priorities at the UN. A mathematical comparison underlines this asymmetry: the U.S. provides 22 percent of the UN's assessed budget but provides much more than that amount to Egypt annually in ESF alone. Egypt's actions at the UN may embolden other member states to oppose U.S. positions when they see a "friend of the U.S." doing the same. Egypt, along with other opponents of U.S. policies at the UN, increasingly seeks to rally support for its positions by widening the divide between the developing countries (which have the votes) and the developed world, for which the U.S. is the most prominent symbol. The result is a

deteriorating atmosphere that will make meaningful reform difficult to achieve. End Summary and Comment.

¶4. (C) Below are some of the issue areas since September in which we have encountered Egyptian opposition to key U.S. objectives at the UN. We do not claim that Egypt is alone in its opposition to our position on any one of the issues noted below. However, Egypt's consistent opposition, aggressive rhetoric and disruptive tactics, particularly behind the scenes, place the Egyptian mission in a league with few others, and often in unsavory company. Other delegations are loath to lobby Egypt hard, assuming that this task rightfully belongs to the U.S. as a result of the strong bilateral relationship. Moreover, when other G-77 delegations observe Egypt getting away with its hostile behavior, they are inclined to conclude the U.S. doesn't really care about the issue at hand.

Budget and Management Reform

¶5. (C) By November 2005, Egypt had established itself as a vocal opponent of U.S. efforts to secure meaningful management reform. Egypt referred to the U.S.-led effort to address management problems within the UN Secretariat as the "overblown ramifications" of the Oil for Food scandal. Reform proponents were attempting to "advance a narrow nationalistic agenda under the banner of management reform." (2005 USUN 2554). Egypt has consistently advocated for management reform initiatives to be considered in the UNGA's Fifth Committee (which considers budget issues), an arena in which their particularly aggressive delegate has been able to create significant gridlock. (2005 USUN 2765). Last December, Egypt was one of the loudest G-77 voices in opposition to the central U.S. position that reform of the UN

must be tied to UN finances, a position Egypt continues to advocate. (2005 USUN 2888). The agreement on a six-month spending cap last year was reached only after a small group of Perm Reps pulled the issue out of the Fifth Committee, where Egypt was one of the leading opponents of compromise. (2005 USUN 2936). More recently, the Egyptian delegate to the Fifth Committee told his U.S. counterpart that "the time for consensus decision-making on budget issues was over" and that there was a need to return to voting.

¶6. (C) In the Fifth Committee's negotiations on proposals regarding the UN's scale of assessments, Egypt supported Russian and Chinese language that rebuffed a proposal that permanent members of the Security Council should pay a greater share of the UN's budget. The Egyptian position widened the gap in positions and made agreement impossible. (USUN 756). While the failure to achieve consensus was not simply Egypt's doing, we found it noteworthy that Egypt took a position that did not immediately appear to have any real impact on its own interests. Less than a month later, the Egyptian PR, complaining to USUN about the possibility that the U.S. might withhold payment of its dues, said that permanent members of the UNSC should indeed pay more into the system -- a position directly at odds with Egypt's actions in the Fifth Committee. These contradictions reinforce our perception that in many cases Egyptian conduct does not reflect a considered policy position but simply constitutes an effort to disrupt progress and block consensus.

Mandate Review

¶7. (C) In the General Assembly debates on mandate review, Egypt has been a consistent and loud advocate of the NAM and G-77 position that only mandates that have not/not been renewed within the past five are subject to the review. (2005 USUN 2854). If the General Assembly accepts this argument, the mandate review process will be stripped of any serious content, as the vast majority of GA mandates are renewed each year through repetitive resolutions. At the same time, Egypt has consistently called for the General

Assembly to declare the "politically sensitive mandates" (i.e., the mandates that authorize biased Palestinian committees) off-limits to the review process. This effort is widely seen as a shot across the U.S. bow given our well-known opposition to the Palestinian mandates.

ECOSOC and Development

18. (C) Egypt has been a difficult partner right from the start in the effort to negotiate the ECOSOC reform and development resolutions as part of the follow-up to the September 2005 Summit outcome. (2005 USUN 2711). Egypt has been reported to USUN by numerous delegations to be one of the principal negative actors within the G-77 on this subject. Egypt has apparently played a heavy role in swaying more moderate countries to go along with some six pages of radical amendments to the development resolution that would mandate and monitor 0.7 percent ODA transfers and unravel hard-won language obtained in the Monterrey Consensus and the World Summit Outcome Document on the responsibility of countries to foster good governance. USUN has heard on more than one occasion that Egypt, along with a handful of other states, is determined to block progress on the development text. (USUN 267 and USUN 1034).

19. (C) In current UNGA negotiations on a declaration for the HIV/AIDS Summit of May 31-June 2, Egypt has been blocking consensus. As one example, Egypt has been active in the Africa Group to promote expansive language on resource transfers, proposing new text that goes beyond language agreed upon by Heads of State last September.

Human Rights Council

110. (C) During negotiations related to the establishment of the Human Rights Council (in lieu of the former UN Commission on Human Rights), Egypt adopted a series of positions contrary to U.S. goals. Early on, Egypt advocated for delay, claiming that there was no time pressure to reach a conclusion. (USUN 84). Once the negotiations commenced, Egypt lobbied for unhelpful detail on a "step-by-step" approach to dealing with countries that violate human rights,

an approach that would have tied the new council's hands rather than support timely action. In addition, Egypt opposed one of our core objectives, that is the election of an entirely new membership; rejected a key U.S. proposal to enable the HRC to refer particularly egregious and potentially destabilizing abuses to the Security Council; and suggested that the peer review of members should be based on information from the government concerned (a position that earned the support of Syria). (USUN 105 and USUN 154). Following the adoption of the HRC resolution, Egypt appears to have continued its obstructionist efforts in Geneva, where it has recently blocked consensus on the HRC's first president. (Geneva 1182).

Worsening the General Assembly - Security Council Split

111. (C) Egypt has also emerged as one of the loudest voices to protest Security Council "encroachment" on General Assembly authorities, the myth that has been adopted to provide comfort in the face of widespread recognition that the UNGA is playing an increasingly smaller role on the global stage. Egyptian rhetoric fuels part of this self-fulfilling prophecy. Egypt is now one of the primary sponsors of a NAM attempt to bolster the UNGA's role in the selection of the next Secretary-General by demanding certain actions from the Security Council. (USUN 892). If successful, the NAM effort will only increase the tension between the two UN bodies. Egypt played up similar themes in the negotiation of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). The U.S. has sought a PBC tied closely to the Security Council so as to properly manage post-conflict situations in which there

is an ongoing UN peacekeeping operation authorized by the Council. Egypt took the opposite view and deplored the Security Council's "authority in driving the PBC's work." (2005 USUN 2919). Egypt has exerted strong influence over weaker nations in the African Group, pushing them to grab for more seats on the Organizational Committee and to reorder geographic distribution, rather than supporting positions designed to ensure the PBC will operate for the benefit of war-torn African nations. Following the establishment of the PBC, Egypt attempted to block the establishment of the Secretariat's support office - even after the U.S. had

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compromised to accept what was understood to be the G-77 position. (The description of the Egyptian delegate's efforts, in USUN 747, provides a detailed example of Egyptian obstructionism.)

Counter-terrorism and Middle East

¶12. (C) In a General Assembly review May 11-12 of the Secretary-General's recently released report of

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recommendations on a global counter-terrorism strategy, Egypt criticized the "foreign occupation" of Iraq, claiming the "reason for terrorism in Iraq is foreign occupation." The Egyptian representative also blamed Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories for violence, and argued -- as Egypt has in the past -- that resistance activities are not terrorism. (USUN 977 and USUN 1040). In the negotiation of last September's Outcome Document, Egypt was among those (joined by Pakistan, Iran, and others) who blocked inclusion of widely agreed language because they were not satisfied with the portion on national liberation movements. In the negotiation of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT), Egypt has been one of the consistent opponents of progress and compromise.

¶13. (C) During negotiations over the documents negotiated at the March meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women, Egypt sought to include multiple references to "alien and colonial domination" and "foreign occupation," knowing these phrases were unacceptable to the U.S., but hoping that at least one instance of their use would be accepted by the Commission. They also attempted to insert an irrelevant reference to "nuclear disarmament" into a document dealing with women and economic development. Last fall, when the General Assembly adopted by consensus the Israeli resolution to mark January 27 as World Remembrance Day for Holocaust victims, Egypt was the only Arab state and one of only four states (the others were Indonesia, Malaysia, and Venezuela) to make a statement of reservation, arguing "no one should have a monopoly on suffering."

Nonproliferation

¶14. (C) Over the course of the last two years, Egypt consistently has disrupted efforts aimed at focusing the world's attention on nonproliferation and at making the UN's security-related bodies and conferences more responsive to the current international security environment. Egyptian diplomats in New York have been quite skillful in helping to direct the focus of NAM concerns away from current WMD proliferation-related threats and onto the programs and policies of the U.S. and the other NPT Nuclear Weapons States, thus ensuring that the U.S. and its allies receive most of the blame when security-related meetings fail to produce results. However, in certain instances when the balance of opinion at the UN seemed to begin to shift away from Cold War-era thinking (outdated disarmament initiatives), Egypt resorted to tactics that were more overt and anti-U.S. in nature.

¶15. (C) Two significant examples where Egypt employed these tactics are the 2005 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference and the negotiations on the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. In both instances, Egypt almost single-handedly blocked consensus on language that the U.S. and many non-nuclear weapons states could support, and then sought privately and publicly to blame the U.S. when negotiations failed to produce results. To this day, very few are aware that Egypt, with support from Iran and Pakistan, scuttled a compromise text that otherwise could have ensured the inclusion of key security-related provisions in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document.

¶16. (C) On a related subject, Egypt in 2004 joined other NAM radicals in the disarmament field in an unsuccessful effort to block the equation of nuclear nonproliferation with nuclear disarmament as "priority issues" within the Strategic Plan of the UN's Department of Disarmament Affairs (DDA). Had Egypt and the others been successful, DDA for the past two years would not have enjoyed its current mandate to support the UNSC's 1540 Committee in its efforts to assist UN member states to develop national legislation to curb the illicit transfer of WMD-related articles and technology to rogue states and terrorist organizations.

¶17. (C) Comment: Regardless of Egypt's possible motivations -- which likely include concerns that an international focus on Iranian noncompliance with its NPT and IAEA obligations could divert regional attention away from Israel, or precipitate limitations on possession of the nuclear fuel cycle -- it would be difficult to conclude that Egypt is not at least aware that Iran is a direct beneficiary of its actions, and the U.S. and its allies direct victims. End Comment.

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